

**CHILD PROTECTION ACCOUNTABILITY COMMISSION
OCTOBER 12, 2005
NEW CASTLE COUNTY COURTHOUSE, 10TH FLOOR
MINUTES**

Those in attendance:

Members of the Commission:

Susan Cycyk
Peter Feliceangeli, Esq.
Sergeant Randy Fisher
(proxy for Col. Macleish)
Carlyse A. Giddins
Sgt. Phil Hill
(proxy for Col. McAllister)
John Humphrey
The Honorable Chandlee J. Kuhn
The Honorable Jennifer Mayo
Janice Mink
Joanne Miro (proxy for Sec. Woodruff)
Mary Ball Morton (proxy for Sec. DeSantis)
Merrijan Pierce
Julia Pearce
(proxy for William Murray)

Staff:

Tania M. Culley, Esq.

Statutory Role:

Dir., Div. of Child Mental Health 16 Del. C. §912(a)(9)
Attorney General's Office 16 Del. C. §912 (a)(3)
Child Protection Comm. 16 Del. C. §912(a)(10)

Dir. of Div. of Family Servs. 16 Del. C. §912 (a)(2)
Child Protection Comm. 16 Del. C. §912(a)(10)

Child Protection Comm. 16 Del. C. §912 (a)(10)
Family Court 16 Del. C. §912(a)(4)
Family Court 16 Del. C. §912(a)(4)
Child Protection Comm. 16 Del. C. §912 (a)(10)
Dept. of Education 16 Del. C. §912 (a)(8)
Children's Department 16 Del. C. §912(a)(1)
Inter. Comm. On Adoption 16 Del. C. §912(a)(10)
Child Placement Review Board 16 Del. C. §912 (a)(7)

Executive Director

Guests:

Joe Bakker
Candace Charkow
Karen DeRasmo
Islanda Finamore
Lorin M. Hochman, Esq.
Jean Kaiser
Carl Danberg, Esq.

Mariann Kenville-Moore
Anne Pedrick
Carrie Reilly
Shirley Roberts
Christina Showalter, Esq.
Joseph Smack

I. Welcome/Introductions

Janice Mink chaired the meeting as Jennifer Ranji was unable to attend.

II. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the July 13, 2005 meeting were unanimously approved without any changes.

III. Special Committee Reports

A. Abuse Intervention Committee (“AIC”)

Mariann Kenville-Moore reported that this group met at the end of September and brainstormed as to future activities. She explained that The Children’s Justice Act requires that states that receive funds conduct a plan for the state every three years. Part of that plan includes an assessment of needs for the state and the assessment focuses on the multi-disciplinary response to child abuse investigations. The assessment identified seven issues, three of which are being addressed through current projects of the AIC. The fourth relates to the coordination and investigation with schools. The recommended intervention is to revise and update the school Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") between the Department of Education ("DOE"), the Department of Services for Children, Youth and their Families ("DSCYF"), and the school districts. Ms. Kenville-Moore reported that Linda Shannon of the Division of Family Services (“DFS”) is taking the lead on this project and will be working with the DOE but wanted to extend an invitation to CPAC members to participate in revisions of the school MOU. Any CPAC members who are interested in becoming involved with this project should contact Linda Shannon via state email.

The fifth issue relates to the medical communities’ recognition and reporting of suspected child abuse/neglect cases. As a result, the AIC will be forming a subcommittee to explore this issue further, make recommendations on how to address the issue and design a plan for implementation. Ms. Kenville-Moore noted that there are different models being used throughout the country to educate family practitioners and pediatricians, so the group is looking for leadership in the medical community to head this subgroup. Ms. Kenville-Moore encouraged anyone interested to contact her via state email.

The next AIC meeting is December 2 at 9:30.

B. CPAC Adoption and Safe Families Act (“ASFA”) Timelines Subcommittee

Commissioner Mayo reported that the group continues to work through the files from 2002-2005 looking for 15 different factors. Data compilation in Kent and Sussex counties will be done by the end of the year and Commissioner Mayo will report on that at the January meeting. She believes that New Castle County ("NCC") should be done with 2002 data by the end of year.

Commissioner Mayo also reported that Julia Pearce has been compiling the data and merging Excel files to help examine it. Additionally, DFS has been in contact with some information technology subcontractors that the subcommittee has been involved with in determining whether they will help analyze data or develop a prospective database for the future, using the different computer programs that different agencies already have.

C. CPAC Educational Needs of Foster Children Subcommittee

Tania Culley reported that the October 7 conference, attended by approximately 400 people, was a huge success. The conference attendees included judges, educators, nurses, child welfare

workers from all three divisions within DSCYF as well as the Office of Prevention/Early Intervention, advocates for kids, private providers, foster parents and others. She was pleased to see collaboration going on during the day. Ms. Culley reported that the subcommittee did a phenomenal job putting the conference together and extended her thanks to all of its members. Ms. Culley added that the group will reconvene and figure out what to do with what they learned at the conference. At the beginning of the day, conference attendees were given cards on which they wrote issues they perceived to be problematic. The subcommittee hopes to use those ideas and the trends they can identify from them as a springboard for going forward. Ms. Culley and Ms. Kenville Moore agreed to coordinate to see if the subcommittee and the AIC could partner to address some of the issues raised.

Joanne Miro echoed Ms. Culley's comments that the conference went well and added that she heard a lot of good questions being asked, and saw lots of collaboration going on through dialogue and interactive workshops.

D. CPAC Extended Jurisdiction Subcommittee

Julie Pearce reported that the group completed its meetings with the Departments of Labor, Housing, and Social Services. They will meet again on October 2 at 3:00 at Silverlake with the goal of figuring out what their recommendations should be.

E. Inter Agency Committee on Adoption ("IACOA")

Merrijane Pierce reported that although this group does not meet over the summer, they have a meeting today. They are gearing up for November which is National Adoption month. She discussed "Celebrating Adoptive Parents" a dinner/workshop to be held at Cranston Heights Fire Company on November 5 from 4:00-9:00 p.m., which will feature Pat O'Brien, a national speaker. The dinner will be followed by the speaker, a silent auction and presentation of the Nancy McKenna award.

Ms. Culley informed CPAC that Merrijane Pierce had received a national award on September 13—Angels in Adoption. Karen Wilson, a supervisor in Kent County, and Natalie and Brian Rickards, an adoptive family, were also recognized nationally. Congratulations to Merrijane.

Ms. Culley reported on her attendance at the last IACOA meeting at which she discussed the IACOA's concerns regarding their proposed best interests legislation and the CPAC Legislative Subcommittee's determination that the statute needed a longer term solution than that which had been proposed. Since the proposal was made, Commissioner Mayo has chaired legislative workgroups which are working toward these larger improvements. Ms. Culley explained that IACOA was the catalyst for the larger issues for which we need larger change and IACOA was satisfied with the explanation.

F. CPAC Legislative Subcommittee/Legislative Workgroup/Subgroups

Chief Judge Kuhn reported on the last meeting about the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act ("CAPTA") definitions and whether Delaware is meeting them. Chief Judge Kuhn reported that she can no longer chair the group as she thinks that while the Court can participate in such groups, it is inappropriate for the Court to chair a meeting that seeks to make legislative changes. She also reported that at the meeting, there was no real consensus about what to do and that the group is not sure how they want to address the task with which they have been charged. There was discussion as to whether the chair needs to be an attorney.

Next, Commissioner Mayo reported on the workgroups and subgroups, sharing that one group is working on cleaning up the Code and segregating the custody section into two sections so that pro se litigants know where to go when they consult the code regarding family issues. For example, the group is working on proposing to make Chapter 7 the governing law for custody disputes between parents and then having a separate chapter for guardianship and yet another separate chapter for DFS, particularly since DFS does not have its own chapter but is covered in the Family Court Rules. The group is working on moving around and clarifying the different titles and chapters so people know where to go and recognizes they have a lot of work ahead of them.

The second group has developed definitions for dependency, neglect and abuse in the hopes of unifying those definitions in the code. The definitions which the group developed were distributed in the packets handed out today. Dan Atkins chaired this group which received good contributions from the Department of Justice ("DOJ"), grandparents rights groups, and others. Commissioner Mayo asked CPAC members to review the proposed definitions and send comments to her via email by November 15 to take back to the subgroup.

G. CPAC Mental Health Assessments for Foster Children Subcommittee

Susan Cycyk presented the report on behalf of the Attorney General and herself. She noted that the packets handed out today included a one page description of assessment services that should begin in November for all kids entering foster care. She reported that the group decided that the priority would be getting this process in place and implemented. Accordingly, they invited eight people to join the committee which will focus on the newly awarded contract and the provider who will be doing the assessments. Although the group is no longer made up of its original members, they are invited to attend and participate with the group toward the new goal.

The contract was awarded to Child Guidance Resource Centers in Media, PA. They are based in Delaware county and have worked with kids who have been found to be delinquent or had some involvement with some aspect of the child welfare system. Ms. Cycyk noted that this is the fifth or sixth new provider that Child Mental Health ("CMH") has brought into Delaware in the last few years. The new provider will have staff located in DFS offices and will be responsible for screening every child who enters foster care, for conducting all the appropriate collaterals, meeting with the family and ensuring that the child gets appropriate treatment when needed. Additionally, the provider will ensure that when appropriate, the child will get additional screening within 72 hours.

Ms. Cycyk further reported on research Laura Miles conducted for the committee which demonstrated that 12.4% of kids in foster care received mental health services. Ms. Cycyk noted that

not all of these services were provided through CMH but reflected children receiving some form of mental health services. The committee believes, based on national data reviewed, that 40% of kids in foster care should be receiving mental health services and that is the goal of the committee.

The group's next meeting is October 18 at 2:00 p.m. at the Office of the Attorney General. At this meeting, the group will review its purpose, determine who else they would like to invite to join as members and set a meeting schedule.

H. Near Death

Janice Mink reported that the subcommittee was working on an addendum to the last near death report and that on Friday the subcommittee will begin the review of a new case.

IV. Agency Reports/Statistics

As discussed at the last meeting, each of the agencies sent out statistics via OCA in advance of today's meeting. Each agency head was asked to give a brief update and answer any questions people may have.

A. Child Mental Health

Susan Cycyk noted that she circulated a large volume of materials and that she was pleased to have so much information to share with respect to what CMH is measuring about themselves. The first piece of data she discussed indicated that CMH is looking at the racial composition of children they serve to ensure that they are serving minority groups. According to Ms. Cycyk, so far, the data indicates that they are serving minorities well. Looking at the length of time from assignment of a team to delivery of service (which is different from entry into the system) shows a week. CMH is also measuring the length of hospital stay and has found that they have reduced the length of stay in the last three years from 15 days to 10.6 days. Additionally, CMH is measuring the number of clients who have been readmitted to hospitals after 30 days of discharge. Ms. Cycyk noted that the benchmark is 15%. She reported that CMH has a spike and they do not understand why but are looking to see if they are discharging children too quickly or if they are discharging them without the appropriate services. CMH is also starting to measure clients active with juvenile justice, looking specifically within 60 days of CMH closure of a case. So far, the data looks good—according to Ms. Cycyk, only 3% are active with juvenile justice after 60 days of closure.

CMH has also been looking at where the kids they serve live. Currently, most of the children involved with CMH live in the community, however, they expect a rise in those numbers as the number of kids in foster care that are involved with CMH increases with the beginning of assessments discussed above.

Additionally, CMH is looking at whether kids with moderate to severe mental illness or substance abuse issues who should go to school, do go to school. According to their data, 75-80% of those who should go, do go. Ms. Cycyk informed the group that she thinks this is an issue CMH

needs to look at and learn how to do better because 20% of these kids are not going to school so they need to figure out why. She related that it has been hard to get this data but they are working on it.

Ms. Cycyk noted that there was other information in the packet including information regarding school attendance. DSCYF was supportive of and working with DOE to put positive support programs in schools with the hopes of improving attendance and other issues. However, the issue is being addressed district by district and school by school by the school's choice. There is some money from the last year of the Families and Communities Together ("FACT") grant so she and Joanne Miro are working with Central Middle School in Dover to put a counselor in that school for one year, funded by CMH. If they find that this is beneficial, then it will be the school's responsibility to keep the service in place.

Ms. Cycyk also reported that the Division is working hard with the FACT grant to start two programs: one intensive outpatient program in NCC and another day treatment program downstate.

Additionally, Delaware got a national child traumatic stress initiative grant of \$400,000 to put in an evidence based approach to work with kids who have experienced some kind of trauma. Ms. Cycyk told the group this will encompass the kids on which CPAC focuses. CMH plans to have one provider in NCC and another downstate as well as a facilitator to make sure the program is implemented. Ms. Cycyk noted that she knows kids are not always getting best practices when they go for treatment. This is a highly competitive grant which they did not get the first time they applied for it. Ms. Cycyk expressed gratitude toward those who wrote letters of support and noted that they were moving quickly to put the program in place.

Ms. Cycyk agreed to forward a synopsis of the grant program for inclusion in the minutes. That synopsis appears below:

Trauma Grant Application Synopsis

Title: National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative Community Treatment and Services Center Grant
(Category III) RFA SM 05-006
(http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/2005/nofa/fy05rfa_sm05006_NTCSI3_reannounce.aspx)

Funding Agency: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

Total Request: \$400,000/year for four years (max. allowable)

Match: NO match is required

Goals: Increase access for children in public child welfare, juvenile justice and mental health/substance abuse services to evidence-based, trauma specific mental health outpatient treatment (increasing access, serving about 120 additional children for each full year – fewer in year one due to service startup)

Increase use of evidence-based trauma-specific mental health outpatient treatment in Delaware's public child mental health system.

Implementation: Project Director (Child Psychologist) and Administrative Assistant II

2 Outpatient Mental Health Therapists + Clinical Supervision with training/consultation from national experts in Trauma-focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Location: Statewide – Provider will be one of three current statewide providers of DCMHS mental health outpatient treatment. (Catholic Charities, Delaware Guidance Services or Phoenix Mental Health).

We have excellent letters of intent to participate from each of these three providers.

Mariann Kenville-Moore noted that this program coupled with what is going on in the City of Wilmington should have an impact. Ms. Cycyk added to that that CMH is freeing up money from the FACT grant to work with the Wilmington Police and the Department of Public Safety to address kids the police are called to handle and trying to get them into CMH services rather than booked and sent to the Detention Center. As part of this effort, CMH will be sending people to learn the Yale study approach.

Janice Mink posed some questions about the reports that were circulated, specifically as to the categories of clients served by service group. In response to her questions, Ms. Cycyk explained that day treatment, intensive outpatient programs, outpatient, aides, residential treatment centers, and individual residential treatment homes make up the category labeled mental health services. She also explained that the hospital category includes Bay Health, Rockford Center, Riverside Hospital if the child is inpatient, and kids in out of state placements, generally in juvenile justice facilities who end up in the hospital for one reason or another. If a child is involuntarily committed and CMH does not know that child because the child never came through CMH, then the child is funded through CMH and gets classified as receiving hospital services. Ms. Cycyk offered to get more information as to the composition of the "Other" category.

Finally, Ms. Cycyk asked for feedback on the different formats for reporting on the age of clients. Both formats received positive comments so Ms. Cycyk indicated that she could continue to provide both. A question was raised as to why CMH appears to be serving 2 and 3 year olds. Ms. Cycyk believe theses are siblings of a child in a family in which CMH is providing services. Regarding the numbers, Ms. Cycyk believes CMH should be serving more 10-12 year olds than they do so they hope the assessments discussed above will help them pick up more children from this group.

B. Child Placement Review Board ("CPRB")

Julia Pearce reported that she is finishing up the annual report which will be reviewed by the executive committee. Ms. Pearce agreed to present on the annual report at the January meeting.

C. Children's Advocacy Center ("CAC")

John Humphrey reported that the CAC is on target for being involved with 1,350 cases this year referred by DFS or law enforcement. He also indicated that they have been involved in 3,300 case reviews.

Additionally, the Wilmington and Dover centers have completed the accreditation processes with the National Children's Alliance making their final visits on September 15 and 16. Mr. Humphrey reported that they will likely get the results later this month and expects the results to include a few recommendations on things they could do better or improve upon and does not expect any problems. The Georgetown site will begin the process for accreditation next year.

Mr. Humphrey also reported that the licensed clinical social workers ("LCSWs") have been an incredible asset. Specifically, in addition to helping out with recent crises, the LCSWs have made contact with families before the families are scheduled to come in to the CAC and are thereby addressing the families' concerns before they come in which helps to get people in and allays their fears in advance.

The CAC statistics reflect that in July of 2005, the CAC interviewed 69 children who were suspected victims of sexual abuse, 5 who were witnesses to some type of abuse, 5 who were suspected victims of physical abuse and 1 who was the suspected victim of sexual/physical abuse. The average age of these children was 8.78 years; 46 of these children were White, 32 were Black and 2 were Hispanic. 56 of them were female and 24 male. 36 of the referrals came from NCC, 27 from Sussex County, 13 from Kent County, and 3 others came from outside of Delaware. 20 cases were referred from the NCCPD, 11 from DFS in Sussex County, 10 from DFS in NCC, 10 from DFS in Kent County, 14 from the Delaware State Police, and the remainder from other local jurisdictions. In the month of July, the CAC conducted 285 in person case reviews, had 130 cases closed to the review process and conducted 43 other case reviews.

The CAC statistics reflect that in August of 2005, the CAC interviewed 65 children who were suspected victims of sexual abuse, 7 who were witnesses to some type of abuse, 5 who were suspected victims of physical abuse and 2 who was the suspected victim of sexual/physical abuse. The average age of these children was 7.73 years; 52 of these children were White, 23 were Black, 1 was Hispanic and 3 were classified as Other. 47 of them were female and 32 male. 26 of the referrals came from NCC, 23 from Sussex County, 24 from Kent County, and 6 others came from outside of Delaware. 12 cases were referred from the NCCPD, 13 from DFS in Sussex County, 5 from DFS in NCC, 7 from DFS in Kent County, 9 from the Delaware State Police, and the remainder from other local jurisdictions. In the month of August, the CAC conducted 229 in person case reviews, had 91 cases closed to the review process and conducted 41 other case reviews.

He further reported that for FY07, he expects the CAC to have a shortfall of \$300,000 because of the expiration of federal grants and an increase in the cost of medical contracts for Dupont pediatrics, including the services of Dr. DeJong (whose contract payment will double) and 2 nurse practitioners. The increases in contracts alone will be an increase of \$45,000 per year. To address

the shortfall, the CAC will submit its budget requests before Friday for budget hearings and Mr. Humphrey will appear on November 17 to ask for the necessary funding.

Mr. Humphrey also reported that the CAC is switching its case tracking system to a national database called NCA track. The hope is that this will provide better reporting data for the CAC in the future for case disposition and other issues. Additionally, if they are able, they hope to give access to law enforcement and the DOJ so that they can go online and access certain cases to provide updates. Training for the system began last month and they hope to have the system in place in January 2006.

Finally, Mr. Humphrey reported that things will get busier next month with the preparations for the Finding Words training and work with the AIC. Contracts were signed with the University of Delaware and the Children's Justice Act which will provide funding for training for 2006.

D. Department of Justice

Pete Feliceangeli provided the litigation statistics for Deputy Attorneys General who represent DFS for July 1, 2004-June 30, 2005. According to those statistics, DFS Deputy Attorneys General ("DAGs") represented DFS in 2,932 hearings (1,800 in NCC, 560 in Kent County and 572 in Sussex county), including 512 probable cause hearings, 421 adjudicatory hearings, 1,101 dispositional and review hearings and 339 other dependency/neglect related hearings. Additionally, the DFS DAGs participated in 409 permanency hearings. During this timeframe, 59 Termination of Parental Rights hearings in which DFS DAGs participated were granted; 27 adoptions were granted. The DFS DAGs also participated in 142 fair hearings/substantiation hearings.

The statistics show a 26% increase in overall court activity from the previous fiscal year, most of which is in NCC where there is a 33% increase in litigation activity.

Mr. Feliceangeli further reported that at the July meeting he had told Commission members that one Kent County deputy was moving to another assignment within the DOJ and that her successor was to start on August 15. This Friday, October 14 is the successor's last day as she is leaving the DOJ to go to the Office of the Child Advocate ("OCA"). Accordingly, the DOJ is in the process of filling another vacancy in Kent County.

Mariann Kenville-Moore reported that there are postings for two positions downstate and they hope to fill them shortly.

Ms. Culley noted that from the numbers, it looks like the deputies in NCC are doing triple the work than those in the other counties and that it appears that the DOJ could use one or two more deputies. She invited the DOJ to let the Commission know if there is anything they can do to help alleviate that burden as it is apparent that people are being pushed to the maximum.

E. Department of Education

There was no report from the Department of Education.

F. Division of Family Services

Ms. Giddins reported that the federally mandated annual progress and service report for the Children's Department has been approved by the Children's Bureau, Region III. This is significant in that it allows them to receive \$2.2 million in federal grant money to provide services to children and their families. Ms. Giddins also shared that the Children's Department was recognized by Region III for providing training on system of care to all employees as well as for permanency outcomes. The full report should be available for review on Children's Department website: www.state.de.us/kids.

Ms. Giddins recognized Candy Charkow who has been invited to present at two upcoming conferences. The first, in Maryland is the 8th Annual Child Abuse and Neglect Judicial Conference; the second is the Child Welfare Workforce Development and Workplace Enhancement Conference where Ms. Charkow will discuss Delaware's retention initiatives.

Ms. Giddins also shared that recently, the Office of Children's Services held a retreat at which they continued to develop ideas to reinvent themselves and look for opportunities for improvement. At the retreat, Ms. Charkow and her team pulled together front line supervisors and administrators to look at how they are organized. They found that even though foster care cases are only 50% of the workers' workload, they represent 75% of their work.

DFS is also looking at how best to handle the kids in Youth Rehabilitative Services ("YRS") and CMH services that DFS has become responsible for. One idea that has been suggested is specializing child protective workers and possibly creating a serious child abuse and neglect unit focusing on high risk families, another that would focus on families that have moderate risk and need ongoing monitoring, and another that would focus on low risk families that need immediate but not long term support (for example, a family that would need services for 2 or 3 months). Currently, DFS is exploring what modifications they would need to make to incorporate such a concept and developing an action plan if they decide to go that route.

Ms. Giddins further reported on recent meetings that DFS leadership held with the Office of Children's Services staff (on August 30 in NCC, September 6 in Kent County and September 12 in Sussex County) at which they embraced system of care but recognized that they have a long way to go to incorporate system of care into the organization. Ms. Giddins further noted that she reviewed the DFS mandate and told staff that system of care is a part of the legislative mandate and not a new concept. Common themes that emerged from the employee meeting include: concerns with the role of the Family Court, finding resources for families that go beyond mandated services, and wait time for hearings. Ms. Giddins told staff that there is a Department Court Expectation work group where they have conducted surveys of workers and are looking to clarify the responsibilities of Family Court liaisons. The workgroup identified that DFS has a fairly good curriculum related to court expectations but that this is not necessarily true in the rest of the Department. This workgroup will hold workshops and trainings in the future.

Ms. Giddins also told Commission members that she has discussed with staff the concerns that were publicized in a recent News Journal article and felt that feedback from staff was positive. Mike Peyser explained to workers how caseload data is reported to CPAC. Ms. Giddins felt the

meeting at which she informed them that she posts all reports that are shared at CPAC on bulletin boards in the region offices, is committed to having quarterly meetings with staff and to maintaining an open door policy to hear and address their concerns was helpful to staff.

Ms. Giddins reported that there were new foster care contacts issued this past spring. Additionally, the number of kids entering out of home placements have been rising since March. There are currently over 800 kids in foster care which is putting a great strain on resources from a placement and fiscal standpoint. To reinforce partnerships with service providers, DFS has stressed their expectations and is meeting with providers to remind them of what DFS expects of them pursuant to their contracts. On November 8, there will be a follow up meeting with all foster care service providers to discuss ongoing relationships and finding the best way to work together to improve outcomes for children, particularly to improve stability for children. Additionally, DFS has national standards to which it is held accountable. Using those standards, DFS hopes to develop a report card format for service providers and has invited partners (CPRB, Grassroots Citizens for Children and OCA) to participate in the creation of such a format. Ms. Giddins indicated that she will get meeting information about that initiative to Commission members.

In the area of adoption, a child in DFS custody was recently featured on Wednesday's Child and that as Ms. Giddins spoke, Frank Perfiniski, the DFS Adoption Program Manager was taping a segment for Comcast Newsmakers for National Adoption Month.

Ms. Giddins noted that the statistics had been handed out and that they reflect that investigation case loads are experiencing a normal increase with the return to school. There are currently 12 investigation workers who are over standard: three are over standard by one, three are over by two, four staff are over by three, and four staff had 21 cases. Ms. Giddins noted that part of the problem was caused by over assignment by a supervisor and that that problem has since been corrected. The fully functioning average in Kent is 13.9. DFS will continue to monitor that region closely for long term trends.

The increase in hotline reports previously identified is continuing into FY06. From FY04-05 there was a 13.7% increase in hotline reports which created a 10.7% increase in the number of investigations that are being conducted. It therefore makes sense that foster care placements are up as well. At the end of August, there were 821 children in out of home placements as compared to 712 last year.

In treatment, Kent County is a hot spot. The treatment average hovered slightly above the standard from August to October of 2004 and has been above average since. To address this, DFS added an additional staff member to the treatment complement in Kent County in February. As a result of the year-long trend, DFS has requested approval to invoke Senate Bill 265 to add a casual seasonal worker to the Kent County complement with the hope that that position will be converted to a full time position. DFS is waiting to hear back from the budget director as to whether the request has been approved.

Regarding turnover, Ms. Giddins reported that DFS had four workers leave last quarter, three of whom were in investigation and one of whom was in treatment. All four of the workers who left had been in New Castle County. Overall, the turnover rate for the first quarter of FY 06 is 2.3%.

Regarding vacancies, there are currently no caseworker vacancies and only 3 trainee vacancies. DFS continues to hire and recruit. Ms. Giddins reported that DFS is in the best shape it has been in regarding trainees with eight of 15 fully functioning. She further noted that in the past, the trainees have been utilized more to support investigation workers but now with expectations in the treatment area, trainees are being utilized more to support treatment workers.

Tania Culley pointed out that the recent hot button areas have been University Plaza and Kent County but that previously that had been Elwyn. She wanted to publicly acknowledge Elwyn has stabilized investigation and treatment over the last few years and compliments Shirley Roberts, the regional administrator for Elwyn who was present at the meeting.

Ms. Giddins reported that there has been an increase of over 100 kids in foster care in a year. Ms. Giddins attributes the increase to growth within the state which will naturally increase the number of kids coming into care as well as increased referrals. Although the referrals are coming from everywhere, NCC has the highest increase. The increase is spread among a variety of reporters and even in September and October, is not solely due to increased reports from schools.

DFS has also looked at the ages of kids coming into care and has noticed a huge increase in older kids. There are more kids coming into care in the age 0-6 population and in the teenage population. The teens pose the greatest challenge because DFS does not have appropriate services to meet their needs. This is a growing trend in Delaware and throughout the country.

In examining the increasing numbers, DFS has looked at the decisions that have been made to bring kids into care, noting that 97% of the time, DFS administration has agreed with a worker's decision to bring kids into care. This shows that caseworkers are making the right decisions and further that the Court is agreeing with the decisions.

Tania Culley noted that DFS ran a sex abuse refresher training for seasoned workers. Anne Pedrick attended the two day training and found it to be comprehensive and interactive and thought that staff got a lot out of it. DFS should be complimented for organizing this training.

Karen DeRasmo raised the issue that adding to the difficulty of finding foster care placements for teens was the lack of support and mentioned a task force that worked on ensuring training for foster parents and identified a range of supports to help make these placements successful. She asked if a CPAC task force should look at the supports and see if any of them can be put in place. Without proper supports (for example, respite, 24 hour mental health support), placements for teens will continue to be a problem and will not go away. Tania Culley suggested looking at the issue in January since DFS will be 9 months into the new contracts by then. Additionally, Ms. Culley can get feedback from some of OCA's 350 volunteer attorneys to see how placements are going.

As a result of the increase in placements, DFS has over a \$2 million deficit in their foster care line and their adoption line (a \$1 million deficit per line). Part of the problem is attributable to DFS having 100 more kids in foster care than last year since March. While there are not currently any initiatives for an increase in foster care funds, DFS is spending what they need to spend. One thing they are doing to address the problem is buying more capacity from contracted service providers than what they are contracting for, but they definitely need more placements (ie, foster homes, group care, shelter care, etc.). DFS as well as other service providers are constantly recruiting for new homes.

G. Family Court/CASA

Chief Judge Kuhn related that the Court Appointed Special Advocate ("CASA") report had been provided and shared that Loretta DeShields is the new head of CASA and the Court Improvement Project ("CIP") and that her position was now under the Director of Legal Affairs. Additionally, there is one CASA coordinator vacancy and the Court is looking to fill that and expand the program. One way in which they are trying to do that is that Ms. DeShields is going to get involved in public announcements to try to recruit CASAs and get more diversity within the CASA program.

In response to questions asked about statistics, Ms. Culley shared that she and Ms. DeShields were meeting and coordinating their statistics. CASA was involved in 67 new cases in the last quarter. During that time period, of the children CASA served, 42.2% were Black, 46.4% Caucasian, 5.3% Hispanic, 6% Mixed and 0.2% other. 52.3% of the children involved with CASA are Male and the other 47.7% female.

Chief Judge Kuhn reported that the Court expects to have two new judges in place as of January 1. The Senate confirmation hearings are scheduled for November 9. One of the newly created positions will go to the At Risk Unit to service the CIP and children at risk caseload and the other position to the civil unit, although there could be an internal shift—both new judges could go to civil and one civil judge could go to at risk—no decisions have been made yet.

Chief Judge Kuhn further reported that the Court is planning retreats for next year to focus on child welfare issues.

H. Law Enforcement

New Castle County Police Department ("NCCPD")

Sergeant Hill noted that the statistics for his unit had been handed out. These numbers reflect that from January 2004 through December 2004, the NCCPD Family Services/Domestic Violence Unit was involved in 483 cases. The unit handled approximately 40.25 cases per month during which each detective received approximately 5 new cases per month. The average caseload per detective was 6 cases per month and the average case requires about 40 hours of work. He also added that there are approximately another 50 cases that are not reflected in the statistics which come from cases that are handled by the patrol unit (for example, responses to a domestic where a parent is trying to discipline a child).

From January 2005 to September 2005, the unit handled 303 cases, with an average of 33.66 cases handled per month. Each detective received approximately 4.2 new cases per month and had the same average caseload as reflected in the prior statistics.

State Police

There was no report from the state police but Sergeant Fisher offered to start providing statistics going forward.

I. Office of the Child Advocate

Ms. Culley related that there were no statistics available today. Heather Williams, who comes to OCA from the DOJ will start as the Sussex County Deputy on October 17.

V. Old Business from 7/13 Meeting

A. Consent Agendas

The group agreed to continue to go forward and review agency statistics prior to each quarterly meeting.

B. Day/Frequency of future CPAC meetings

The second Thursday and the third Thursday of each third month were discussed as possibilities for future meeting times, however, none provided a solution to the current problem of one CPAC member having a standing conflict in that several members had conflicts on the alternative days. Therefore, the group decided that the meetings will remain as they are. Accordingly, the 2006 meetings will be January 11, April 12, May 24 (legislative), July 12, and October 11.

VI. New Business

A. Child Welfare Workloads

After the July meeting, there was an editorial in the newspaper written by DFS workers which could be read to suggest that CPAC was not doing its job. Janice Mink asked Carlyse Giddins to let the group know what DFS is doing to address workloads.

Ms. Giddins explained that child welfare workloads are a concern and that CPAC would be remiss as a commission if it did not keep that issue in the forefront. Ms. Giddins reported that workload concerns within the agency have increased and that a lot has happened since Senate Bill 142 was passed in 1997, including CIP, ASFA, numerous recommendations from case reviews, increased numbers of kids in care, and other issues, which put more expectations in place. Within the Office of Children's Services they are looking at how to restructure and support staff and have hired four additional casual seasonal family services assistants, one for each region. After employee meetings earlier this year, they have pulled together work groups to look at reducing workloads and develop an action plan because there is no one thing that will solve the problem. Nevertheless, DFS has committed to going back and looking at different areas to see how to best address the issue. Ms.

Giddins and Ms. Charkow (as well as Tania Culley and Janice Mink) will attend a national conference in December that will address caseloads and workloads. Ms. Giddins remains concerned about expectations and the quality of work DFS can do, particularly as the number of hotline reports have increased and the number of children coming into care has likewise increased.

B. The National Leadership Summit on the Protection of Children

Chief Judge Kuhn told the group that she, Judge Coonin, Ms. Giddins and Loretta DeShields attended the The National Leadership Summit on the Protection of Children in Minneapolis which was attended by representatives of 53 states and US territories. Chief Judge Kuhn explained that the intent of this summit was to bring all of the judiciaries together and get them to take the lead and advocate for child welfare from the judicial perspective. At the conference, the Delaware representatives developed an action plan, which the Chief Judge both passed out and read to the group.

The Chief Judge further noted that U.S. Senate Bill 1679 had been introduced nine days prior to this summit and that it sets out both what the recommendations are for child welfare nationally and what the priorities and plans are. Chief Judge Kuhn further noted that the bill has a fairly significant fiscal note attached to it. She also explained that the purpose of this group is not to overlap with CPAC but to coordinate and collaborate with CPAC.

Regarding next steps, Chief Judge Kuhn reported that an executive committee with a statewide team will be set up and planning will begin for a conference to include national speakers.

VII. Other Business

Jennifer Ranji is working on the CPAC Annual Report and hopes to have a draft to discuss at the January Meeting.

VIII. Public Comment

Jean Kaiser, a social worker from Child Inc., presented the case of a woman who she works with who she thinks has not been treated fairly by the system and asked CPAC if there was anyone who could look into the case.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m. The next quarterly meeting will be January 11, 2006.